clearance of cases is, *inter-alia,* on account of time taken by the applicants for removal of deficiencies. Further the term of the National Committee constituted for the purposes of section 35AC of the Income Tax Act, 1961 expired in November, 2007. The reconstituted Committee is scheduled to meet in April, 2008 to consider the pending applications which contain the required particulars and documents.

Recovery of outstanding loans by PSU Banks

525. DR. V. MAITREYAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

the total outstanding loans under various categories which are due for more than three years in various Public-Sector Banks;

the reasons for the huge outstanding;

the steps being taken to recover these loans;

whether it is a fact that many banks are writing off these loans as bad debts causing huge losses to the banks *vis-a-vis* their performances; and

if so, the reasons for writing off these loans?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRIP AWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) As on 31.03.2007, public sector banks (PSBs) had gross Non-performing Assets (NPAs) amounting to Rs. 38,974 crore, out of which Rs. 14,275 crore were in Substandard Assets Category, Rs. 19,873 crore in Doubtful Assets Category and Rs. 4,826 crore in Loss Assets Category. In percentage terms, these constituted 2.7% (gross NPAs), 1.0% (Sub-standard Assets), 1.4% (Doubtful Assets) and 0.3% (Loss Assets) of the total advances of these banks.

(b) and (c) The factors responsible for NPAs, *inter-alia,* include diversion of funds by the borrower and wilful default in repayment, deficiency in credit appraisal and supervision, inefficient management of the unit financed, poor follow up and monitoring, unviability or sickness of the unit due to change in technology demand pattern and other policy etc.m non-completion of project due to cost and time overruns and other factors, such as non-availability of raw materials etc., labour problems, natural calamities, delay in disposal by courts of suits filed by banks, etc. However, the banks monitor their loan accounts at various levels and take appropriate corrective action, on an ongoing basis, to arrest slippages to NPA category.

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Government of India have taken various steps to improve asset quality of the banks which, *inter-alia,* include prescribing prudential norms for provisioning and classification of non-performing assets, guidelines for prevention of slippages, introduction of Corporate Debt Restructuring mechanism, One Time Settlement schemes, enactment of (i) The Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI) Act, 2002, (ii) the Credit Information Companies (Regulation) Act, 2005, and (iii) the Recovery of Debts due to Banks and Financial Institutions (DRT) Act, 1993, etc. Due to concerted efforts, the net NPAs of the PSBs have reduced from 4.5% of Net Advances as on 31 st March, 2003 to 1.1 % as on 31 st March, 2007.

(d)and(e) The banks write-off NPAs for several reasons viz. to cleanse their balance sheets through prudential write-offs, to improve asset quality and to get rid of unrealisable portion of their bad loans in accordance with their Board approved policies and RBI guidelines.